



## TOP 10 RULES FOR CITY CANDIDATES

As a candidate for elective office in the City of San Diego, you are responsible for ensuring that your campaign committee and staff comply with the City's campaign laws. If someone working for your campaign (regardless of whether the staffer is a volunteer or a paid professional) violates the City's campaign laws, you are responsible for their actions and will be required to pay any fines levied by the Ethics Commission. In order to avoid inadvertent violations, you are strongly encouraged to study the Ethics Commission Candidate Manual, the Ethics Commission's campaign-related fact sheets, and the Fair Political Practices Commission Campaign Disclosure Manual for Local Candidates, all of which are available on the Ethics Commission's website at [www.sandiego.gov/ethics](http://www.sandiego.gov/ethics).

Some of the most important rules for City candidates to remember are as follows:

1. Disclose all contributions received and expenditures made on campaign statements and file them (in paper or electronic format) on time with the City Clerk. Carefully review your committee's campaign statements before you sign (or electronically submit) them under penalty of perjury. Ask your treasurer or staff if you have questions.
2. Before you deposit a contribution: (1) ensure that it does not exceed the City's contribution limit; (2) confirm it is from an individual and not from an organization; (3) obtain the full name and street address for all contributors; and (4) obtain occupation and employer information for all individuals who have contributed a total of \$100 or more.
3. Cash contributions (including money orders and cashier's checks) and expenditures are only permitted in amounts of \$99 or less.
4. Maintain records reflecting contributions received and invoices or receipts for expenditures made. These records must be kept for a period of four years, and will be requested by the Ethics Commission if your committee is selected for audit.
5. Be sure that all of your campaign advertisements include a proper "paid for by" disclosure and that written solicitations for contributions include the required warning regarding reimbursement.
6. Do not spend your personal funds on your campaign without first depositing them into your committee's bank account.
7. Do not loan your committee more than \$100,000 at any one time.
8. Remember that you are personally responsible for your campaign debts. You have 180 days after you receive goods or services, or after you receive an invoice (whichever comes first) to pay your campaign debts. If you can't raise enough money in this time period, you will have to loan or contribute personal funds to your committee to ensure that the committee's debts are timely paid.
9. You are allowed to raise money for the general election before the primary election; however, you may not use general election contributions to pay primary election debts. If you are ultimately not a candidate in the general election (because you won outright in the primary, lost, or withdrew) you must return the general election funds to contributors on a pro rata basis.
10. Remember that your responsibilities as a City candidate do not end if you lose in an election. You are required to file campaign statements until your committee is terminated, even if you have no activity to disclose.

Contact the Ethics Commission at (619) 533-3476 if you have any questions. Do not wait to seek assistance until after you've made a mistake.